From: Tom Conrad
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/1/02 2:01pm
Subject: Microsoft Anti-Trust Resolution

To whom it may concern:

I would like to express my opposition to the Microsoft Anti-Trust "settlement". The settlement is clearly insufficient punishment for a corporation that controls in excess of 90% of the personal computing market and attempts to dominate every aspect of the consumer electronics marketplace.

As a senior software engineer for a major defense contractor, I indirectly depend upon Microsoft for my paycheck; however, I see Microsoft abuse its monopoly power on an almost daily basis. Numerous small companies that provided excellent customer service and superior products (Visio Inc., AutoMap Inc., and many others...) were purchased by Microsoft in the name of "progress" and "innovation". The technology developed by these companies was dissolved into the "MS Monopoly" (a phrase that is probably trademarked by Microsoft by now), with Microsoft claiming credit for the "innovation" of the original products. As part of the "Microsoft overhaul", the products from these former companies were usually packed with useless features (such as promotions for other Microsoft products) and sold at higher prices (ironically, because of the new "features").

As a software developer, I'm forced to decipher Microsoft's pathetic documentation in an attempt to create products that compete with their own applications. I've tried using Microsoft's so-called "technical support" to try to determine how to implement new software, only to be told I "couldn't" or "shouldn't" do what I'm attempting. After failing to receive answers from their technical support staff after literally weeks of waiting, I would resort to using "undocumented" techniques to determine how to make my software work with their operating systems. Naturally, Microsoft detests those who would dare use "undocumented" features, although a quick analysis of their software indicates their internal developers use the same functions I use. I simply can't imagine Microsoft's "Office 200(whatever)" development team having to wait for weeks to get answers to their questions!

In summary, in order to restore competition into the computing marketplace, Microsoft must be broken into at least two divisions (operating systems and software applications). This would allow smaller companies to compete with Microsoft and would give consumers limited relief from "MS Monopoly 2002". More importantly, such an action would force Microsoft's application developers to live in the same environment as the "rest of us". If you really want to see "innovation", not merely "MS Innovation 2002", break them up! Contrary to Microsoft's statements, the computing world is very unlikely to abruptly end!

--Tom Conrad
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